

- 4 Christianity at home. I Tim. 5:8; Eph. 6:1-4.
 5 Christ at our door. Matt. 25:34-40.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

- 1 Is it a religious act to help the needy?
- 2 Can we be truly religious without helping the needy?
- 3 Are we to use our judgment as to the best way of helping the needy?
- 4 In these days of steam are the starving millions of India at our door or not?
- 5 Was Lazarus a type of the professional tramp or of the unfortunate poor?
- 6 How ought we treat the professional tramp?
- 7 How can we help the poor without encouraging shiftlessness?
- 8 How shall we solve the problem of the unconverted at our door? Mark 5:18-20.
- 9 Is it the work of Christianity to help all kinds of needs or simply spiritual needs?
- 10 What can we learn from the example of Jesus in helping the needy?
- 11 When, if ever, is luxury justifiable?

C. F. YODER.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF TEMPERANCE

JOHN HENRY BARROWS, OF OBERLIN COLLEGE

I have done temperance works for years enough to know that nothing is permanently good that is not entirely reasonable. It must be confessed that bitterness and exaggeration and general intemperance of speech have too often characterized temperance addresses. Dr. Holmes, after quoting Cowper's eulogy of tea as "the cup that cheers but not inebriates," significantly adds, "abstinence from which does not inebriate the vocabulary." I hope to commend my words to the good sense of my readers. I certainly shall if I take and hold biblical grounds in what I have to say.

My first proposition is that drunkenness is a sin. The Bible is a just volume, pronouncing just judgment. It condemns the drunkards, "they that tarry long at the wine." Some temperance reformers are over-lenient to the drunkard, speaking of him and to him only in soft words, on the theory that he is but slightly responsible for the crime of putting "an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains." The word of God does not say that. Its weightiest condemnations fall on the drunkard. He is not to inherit eternal life. He is excluded from the kingdom of God as having defiled that body which was made to be a temple for the divine indwelling, and desecrated that soul which was meant to be a reflex image of the God of holiness. He is under condemnation as a breaker of the divine law, and needs the love of God in Christ to pardon, cleanse, and heal him. The Christian ought to keep this truth in mind in all his efforts to reclaim the drunkard. Thus he will bend over the fallen soul with a pitifulness like that of Christ, whose tears of sorrow came from a heart that knew all things, both the possibilities of good in the vilest and also the appalling ills which sin carries in it and with it eternally. The spirit in which the Christian is to do temperance work is the spirit of the wise evangelist, recognizing the interaction of physical and moral agencies, how the body depraves the soul and the soul may subdue the body, but holding on, above all things, to a divine,

omnipotent Lord who is able to regenerate both soul and body.

I accept the scientific truth that drunkenness may become a disease, to be treated by medicinal and hygienic influences. But it is more than a disease. It is a sin; it is voluntary surrender of man's moral nature to his lower passions, and while medicine is doing its work the divine Spirit and the divine truth may be doing their work. As a wise citizen, the disciple of Jesus will favor all the agencies, social, legal, and physical, which help the drunkard, but if he does not seek to win him to the love of Christ he betrays his Master and his mission. If the Christian teacher in South Africa were content when the Kaffirs had been persuaded to wear civilized clothing, he would simply fail of his distinctive work. And so our work for the drunkards comes short of anything supremely important if it leaves them children of disobedience, abiding under the condemnation of God.

But we need, secondly, to plant ourselves on the Bible truth concerning the drunkard-maker. Woe is pronounced against him. I refer not only to the words of Habakkuk, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him and makest him drunken," but to the words of Christ when he said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." To corrupt the youth from Christian homes and from all others is one of the supreme efforts of the liquor-vender of our day. Roman Catholic priests of Boston once petitioned that no saloon be permitted within four hundred feet of a church. Hundreds of boys from the Sunday-schools of our great cities have been enticed into the way of death by those whose business it is to create and foster an appetite for the alcoholic poison. In Lawrence, Mass., I well knew a man of splendid endowments, handsome as Apollo, strong as Hercules, generous as a prince, who had made fortunes and wasted them in dissipation, who had brought great misery on his lovely family, and who, when I knew him, was fighting a brave fight with the bondage of the drinking habit. It was in vain. When I stood by his coffin, it seemed that all I could say was to ask God to bless the wife and children, to whom he had left a legacy of bitter memories. I once asked him where his fearful slavery began, and he confessed that it was when he was a boy at school.

The diabolical business of making drunkards of children is the pastime of the American liquor-dealer, except where the sword of the law is lifted above his head by the strong arm of the law and order societies. And yet some of our eminent temperance reformers have no words of severe reproof for the venders of strong drink. But the Bible has; it pronounces woe upon them. And yet I do not sympathize with those who imagine that these men are sinners above all

others, or even above the drunkards themselves. In some cases it may be that they are sinners above the drunkards. It is true of the so called respectable dealers. They are the men who know better. They are the men who sin against the white light of plain duty.

Should I ask my reader to name the mightiest obstacle to the advance of the Christian religion in America, the answer would not differ from that given by the Convocation of Canterbury, expressing the sentiments of the English clergy, when, speaking of intemperance, they said, "No evil more nearly effects our national life and character; none more injuriously counteracts the spiritual work of the church." What is it that wastes the church's money? You pay as much in taxes caused by drink as you pay to the church. What is it that breaks down our Sabbaths and our Sunday laws and gives over our great cities to the domination of the depraved and criminal classes? The liquor interest. What is it that leads so many thousands of our young men who ought to be pillars in the church into lives of dissipation? The evil passions of their hearts, supplemented by the thousands of miles of open saloons in our cities, and aided by the example of good people who assert their rights and liberties at the expense of others. What is it that hurts the spiritual life of so many? In part the drink habit. What is it that weakens the force of the church in its testimony against the chief enemy of Christ in the world? The fact that we are not wholly free from alliance with that enemy. What is it that is beating the decalogue into fragments? The drink habit allies itself with every vice; it dethrones God from the heart; it dishonors father and mother; it desecrates the weekly rest-day; it is the ally of licentiousness; it is a great support to that covetousness which is idolatry.

I appeal to young women to set the great force of their example and of their openly expressed convictions on the right side. I appeal to young men not to strengthen the habits of social drinking which are so perilous, and, surely, I may say it in regard to Christian young men, so unjustifiable. I appeal to Christian mothers to teach and to practice that which shall point out the way of safety to their sons, of honor to their country, and of glory to the name of God. I appeal to all to work, as faithful citizens, for the execution of those laws which were meant to restrict this infamous traffic, and which, if fully executed, would almost destroy it. I appeal to all to keep the mind open to new light which the providence of God may throw on this supreme subject. If the human soul is unspeakably sacred, then all that lures that soul into brutality, all that impedes its progress toward God, all that cripples the State that would protect it from wrong, and that robs and demoralizes the church that would instruct and inspire it, is the common enemy of God and man.—Religious Telescope.